



# ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

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Produced by the Kentucky Department of Education

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## First results from Unbridled Learning accountability model released

### College/career readiness is a bright spot in data

The first results from Kentucky's Unbridled Learning accountability model indicate that, in 2011-12, slightly more than 47 percent of the state's public high school students were prepared for college and/or careers, the Kentucky Department of Education announced recently.

This is a nine-percentage-point increase from the 2010-11 school year, for which the average college- and career-readiness rate was 38 percent.

"This increase, which translates to more than 4,500 students, is a direct result of Kentucky's schools' and districts' focus on college and career readiness," Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. "The overriding goal of the state's public education system is to prepare students for the paths they want to take after high school, and these data show that we are making progress toward that goal."

College/Career Readiness is one of five major components of the Unbridled Learning accountability model, which was applied to test scores and other data for the first time for the 2011-12 school year. The data released is the first from the new model and includes information about Achievement, Gap, Growth, College/Career Readiness and Graduation Rate.

Public schools and school districts receive overall scores on a scale of 0 to 100 in the new model. On average, the statewide school overall score was 55.2. For elementary schools, the average was 57.3; for middle schools, 53.5; and for high schools, 54.8.

"Because this year's data is the first from the Unbridled

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## Important ACT dates to know

### ACT test dates

- **Dec. 8, 2012**  
(Nov. 2 was the registration deadline, but late registration deadline is Nov. 16.)
- **Feb. 9, 2013**  
(Jan. 11 is the registration deadline, and late registration deadline is Nov. 18.)
- **March 5, 2013**  
mandatory test dates for all Kentucky high school juniors
- **April 13, 2013**  
(March 8 is the registration deadline, and late registration deadline is March 22.)
- **June 8, 2013**  
(May 3 is the registration deadline, and late registration deadline is May 17.)

## A Parent's Guide to Testing in Kentucky

The Kentucky Department of Education has developed two parent-friendly brochures, one outlining Kentucky's state assessments and the other school accountability. To view both brochures, click [here](#).

*ParentInfo* has been highlighting a part of one of the brochures each issue until they all have been covered. Here is the final installment with more answers to testing questions.

### **Are students tested on writing?**

Yes. Writing is tested in grades 5, 6, 8, 10 and 11. Writing portfolios may be used as instructional tools, but are no longer mandated as part of the accountability system.

### **What kind of responses will students be asked to provide?**

It depends on the test. Multiple-choice questions have one or more introductory sentences followed by a list of response options. Students are asked to select the correct answer among several alternatives. Constructed-response describes any type of item where students must develop or build a response to a question or prompt and include a short answer and extended response types.

### **Will my special needs child be tested?**

Yes. Students identified with educational disabilities are tested. Some students with disabilities will take the assessment without accommodations, some with accommodations and some through an Alternate Assessment process.

### **What is the Alternate K-PREP?**

The Alternate K-PREP serves 1 percent of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These may require an alternate means of participation in Kentucky's statewide assessment to demonstrate achievement. The Alternate Assessment is designed to address the needs of the students by allowing greater depth of adaptations, modifications and alternative modes of participation.

### **Can accommodations be used?**

For students with disabilities, most accommodations included on a student's current IEP, 504 Plan or Program Services Plan are permissible. However, these accommodations must have been used regularly in instruction and assessment during the school year. Check the KDE website, [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov), for more specific information regarding accommodations.

## Students can research potential careers with ACT website

Does your child have any ideas about what he or she might like to be once "grown up?"

ACT has a job profile database to help learn about careers and professions. The resource also can help identify whether skills match up well with a given career, which is very important when considering a future.

More than 19,000 job titles, ranging from white-collar professional to blue-collar technical positions, have been profiled by ACT. This research has identified the most important skills and skill levels for employee selection, hiring and training. Have your child check it out by heading to ACT's workforce [website](#).

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Learning model, I encourage educators, parents, communities, elected officials and others with a stake in public education to think of these classifications as a starting point for improvement," said Holliday. "Although more than two-thirds of schools and districts are in the Needs Improvement category, this is not an indicator of failure. The Unbridled Learning model is one of continuous improvement, and schools and districts now have a wealth of data to use as they plan for improvement in student learning and achievement." Schools and districts also are placed in Rewards and Assistance Categories, based on overall scores and other data.

For more details, including disaggregated data, visit the [School Report Card](#) on the Kentucky Department of Education's website. Not to be confused with student report cards, these Report Cards provide information about each school and district, including test performance, teacher qualifications, student safety, awards, parent involvement and much more. The School and District Report Cards were established by statute, [KRS 158.6453](#), and regulation, [703 KAR 5:140](#). Additionally, the Report Cards must incorporate the requirements of the federal [No Child Left Behind \(NCLB\)](#) Act. To view the complete press release from KDE, click [here](#).

## Capitalize on fascination with manners

**By Ellen Booth Church,  
Scholastic.com**

Five-year-olds Jane and Sarah prepare a tea party in the living room. Dressed up for the event in hats and feather boas, they pass the tea and cookies politely, with plenty of "Please" and "Thank you." They delight in playing at being well-mannered young ladies.

### Perfect Timing

Your kindergartners' natural interest in manners makes the Thanksgiving season an opportune time to help your child focus on them. Manners are an important aspect of your child's social, emotional and moral development. An awareness of basic manners is a prerequisite for the ability to cooperate in a group (such as in school or at the dinner table). Knowing when and how to share or how to be polite is key to your child  
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### Share ParentInfo with others

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## First Lady announces Thanksgiving themed fall reading list for youngsters

First Lady Jane Beshear has announced her Top 10 Fall Reading as a part of her reading recommendations initiative. The theme is Thanksgiving.

"The Thanksgiving holiday is a time for reflection, celebration and gratitude," Beshear said. "It is an excellent opportunity to teach students lessons of cooperation and how to respect the environment. Many of my selections on this list highlight Native American culture and emphasize the art of storytelling and the importance of nature in our lives."

Beshear introduced this reading program in the summer of 2009 and issues reading lists four times per year.

### 2012 FALL READING LIST

1. **Brother Eagle, Sister Sky** by Susan Jeffers (ages 4–8)
2. **The Last of the Mohicans** by James Fenimore Cooper (ages 12 and up)
3. **Corn is Maize** by Alike (ages 4–8)
4. **Ten Little Rabbits** by Virginia Grossman (ages 1 and up)
5. **If You Were at The First Thanksgiving** by Anne Kamma (ages 6–10)
6. **The Journal of Jasper Jonathan Pierce: A Pilgrim Boy, Plymouth, 1620** by Ann Rinaldi (ages 9 - 12)
7. **Arrow to the Sun** by Gerald Dermott (ages 3–6)
8. **Arilla Sun Down** by Virginia Hamilton (grades 9-12)
9. **One Little, Two Little, Three Little Pilgrims** by B.G. Hennessey (ages 2–5)
10. **The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush** by Tomie dePaola (ages 4–8)

First Lady Jane Beshear's official website is <http://firstlady.ky.gov/>. Follow Beshear on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/pages/First-Lady-Jane-Beshear/87068086785](http://www.facebook.com/pages/First-Lady-Jane-Beshear/87068086785).

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developing a positive sense of self and the ability to make friends.

In the younger years, your child may have just imitated your polite language. Now she's in the "why" stage — she wants to know why it's important to say "please" and "thank you." You can help her understand by asking how she feels when someone takes something from her without asking and how she feels when the person asks politely instead. She can understand that if she doesn't like it when people are impolite to her, then others will feel that way, too. You might also explain that people are more likely to cooperate with her if she is polite with them. This may be harder for her to understand, but if you point it out when it's happening, your child will begin to make the connection.

### In the Long Run

Respect is essential to teaching and learning manners. Think about why you are polite.

You may notice that it's not only respect for others, but also your own sense of self-respect. Helping your child feel confident in herself will help her be more comfortable in situations where manners are needed. Plus her strong sense of self-confidence will help her be aware of the effect her manners (or lack of) have on others.

It's important, though, not to push politeness when your child is upset. Telling her to say "thank you" when she's doesn't want to will not build manners; she'll simply rebel. Wait for a happier time (like a tea party) to explore the art of manners.

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